

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01040 101640Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-03 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 COME-00

OC-06 A-01 DHA-02 CCO-00 OPR-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 MCT-01

SY-05 IO-13 ACDA-07 ORM-02 /133 W

-----101653Z 108362 /46

P 101558Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3286

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 229

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

CIA WASHDC

COMSIXTHFLT

COMPHIBRON SIX

COM THREE FOUR MAU

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1040

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION MARCH 4-10

REF: BEIRUT 0919 (DTG 031350Z MAR 77)

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01040 101640Z

1. SUMMARY. FIGHTING CONTINUED IN THE SOUTH. PRESIDENT SARKIS ATTENDED THE AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT MEETING IN CAIRO ON MAR 7-8. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS SAID ON MAR 9 THAT A SIX-MONTH EXTENSION OF THE ARAB SECURITY FORCES IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN. THE ARAB MINISTERS OF ECONOMY APPARENTLY PLAN TO MEET IN RIYADH ON MAR 21 TO DISCUSS AID TO LEBANON. THE

QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE MET AGAIN ON MAR 3. CAMILLE CHAMOUN HAS POSTPONED A PLANNED VISIT TO AUSTRALIA. THE GOL HAS RELEASED STATISTICS SHOWING THE STATE'S DEBT TO THE CENTRAL BANK HAS INCREASED, AND THE CENTRAL BANK HAS ANNOUNCED A NEW LOAN PROGRAM FOR DAMAGED ENTERPRISES. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH.

A. DESPITE RUMORS IN THE LEBANESE PRESS THAT A TEMPORARY CEASE-FIRE WAS IMMINENT, FIGHTING CONTINUED IN THE SOUTH LAST WEEK. ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE DATT SOURCE, THERE WAS HEAVY FIGHTING ON MAR 5 AND 6 IN NABATIYAH BETWEEN THE AHMED JABRIL AND ABU ABBAS FACTIONS OF THE PFLP/GC (SEE IR-6-857-0015-77). SAIQA REPORTEDLY JOINED THE FIGHTING ON THE SIDE OF JABRIL, AND FATAH FORCES WERE USED TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION. CASUALTIES WERE HEAVY, ACCORDING TO THE SAME SOURCE. AT PRESENT, SAIQA AND FATAH ARE COOPERATING TO MAINTAIN ORDER IN NABATIYAH, ACCORDING TO DATT SOURCES.

B. MEANWHILE AN ESTIMATED 30,000 - 40,000 REFUGEES, MOSTLY SHIITE, HAVE FLED THE SOUTH FOR BEIRUT THIS EXACERBATES A SERIOUS SITUATION, BECAUSE THERE WERE ALREADY MANY SQUATTERS ILLEGALLY OCCUPYING HOUSES IN BEIRUT. MANY OF THE SAME SHIITES HAD ORIGINALLY FLED BEIRUT FOR THE SOUTH TO AVOID FIGHTING IN THE CAPITAL, AND ARE NOW BEING FORCED TO RETURN TO THEIR ORIGINAL LOCATION.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01040 101640Z

3. SARKIS IN CAIRO.

PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS AND FOREIGN MINISTER RETURNED TO BEIRUT ON MAR 9 AFTER ATTENDING THE MAR 7-8 AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT MEETING IN CAIRO. WHILE IN CAIRO, SARKIS AND BOUTROS HELD BILATERAL MEETINGS WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS FROM SYRIA, SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT AND OTHER ARAB NATIONS. MOST REPORTS SAID THAT THESE MEETINGS FOCUSED ON ARAB AID AND THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH, INCLUDING THE POSSIBLE DISPATCH OF AN INTERNATIONAL OR UNITED NATIONS FORCE TO KEEP THE PEACE THERE.

4. BOUTROS ON THE ASF AND AID.

FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS AFTER RETURNING FROM CAIRO TOLD JOURNALISTS ON MAR 9 THAT A SIX-MONTH EXTENSION OF THE MANDATE OF THE ARAB SECURITY FORCES, WHICH EXPIRES AT THE END OF APRIL, "CAN BE CONSIDERED AS AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT." HE SAID THE DECISION WOULD BE

ANNOUNCED "AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL WHICH WILL BE HELD BEFORE THE END OF THIS MONTHS." BOUTROS ALSO REMARKED THAT LEBANON HAS "HIGH HOPES" THAT ARAB AID FOR LEBANON WILL BE FORTHCOMING. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT "EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT US THAT THE PARTY WHO MEANS TO PROVIDE AID OR FINANCING GENERALLY SHOWS LESS HASTE THAN THE PARTY DESTINED TO BENEFIT FROM THAT ASSISTANCE."

5. MINISTERS OF ECONOMY TO MEET.

THE MINISTERS OF ECONOMY OF LEBANON, SAUDI ARABIA, KUWAIT, QATAR AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES WILL MEET IN RIYADH ON MAR 21, AL BAYRAQ REPORTED ON MAR 6. THEY WILL DISCUSS ARAB AID TO LEBANON AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT ARAB FUND TO ADMINISTER THIS AID, ACCORDING TO THE PAPER.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 01040 101640Z

6. QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE MEETS.

THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE HELD AN "EXTRAORDINARY MEETING" ON MAR 3 TO "EVALUATE" ONCE AGAIN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORDS, AN NAHAR SAID. THE COMMITTEE ALSO REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED THE "RETURN OF DISPLACED PERSONS TO THEIR ORIGINAL VILLAGES" (I.E. DAMOUR) AND THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTENDING THE ARAB SECURITY FORCE'S MANDATE FOR SIX MONTHS.

7. CHAMOUN VISIT POSTPONED.

THE VISIT TO AUSTRALIA OF FORMER LEBANESE PRESIDENT CAMILLE CHAMOUN, SCHEDULED TO BEGIN ON MAR 10, HAS BEEN POSTPONED. OFFICIALLY, THIS WAS FOR "REASONS OF HEALTH," BUT IN FACT BECAUSE THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT BELIEVED CHAMOUN'S PRESENCE MIGHT CAUSE SECURITY PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY DURING THE QUEEN'S VISIT. THE VISIT HAD BEEN ARRANGED PRIVATELY BY CHAMOUN'S NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY AND SUPPORTERS OF THE PARTY IN AUSTRALIA. THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAD NOT BEEN INVOLVED.

7. FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENTS.

THE GOL HAS RELEASED STATISTICS FOR FEB, 1977, SHOWING THAT COMMERCIAL BANK DEPOSITS IN THE CENTRAL BANK AND CREDITS ADVANCED TO THE STATE BY THE CENTRAL BANK HAVE INCREASED WHILE THE CURRENCY IN CIRCULATION HAS DIMINISHED. AN NAHAR COMMENTED ON MAR 9 THAT CURRENCY

IN CIRCULATION HAD DROPPED BECAUSE PEOPLE WERE NOW
DEPOSITING IN BANKS MONEY THAT HAD BEEN HOARDED DURING
THE FIGHTING. THE PAPER ALSO SAID THAT THE INCREASE
IN DEPOSITS IN THE CENTRAL BANK, WHILE INDICATING
AVAILABLE LIQUID ASSETS, SHOWED THAT THE COMMERCIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 BEIRUT 01040 101640Z

BANKS WERE REFRAINING FROM MAKING LOANS. ON MAR 4,
THE CENTRAL BANK ANNOUNCED A NEW PROGRAM OF LOANS TO
DAMAGED ENTERPRISES UNABLE TO OBTAIN CAPITAL THROUGH
OTHER MEANS.
PARKER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BEIRUT01040
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770082-1216
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770375/aaaacnte.tel
Line Count: 186
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: dbb9d1ba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BEIRUT 919
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Sep-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3155084
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION MARCH 4-10
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/dbb9d1ba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009